

Easy to Grow Houseplants

By Dick Christensen, Colorado Master Gardener in Larimer County

If you are new to growing plants and have no idea what can grow indoors, here are a few suggestions. Many of these plants also tolerate indirect light conditions.



Jade Plant

Jade plant (*Crassula ovata*) is a succulent and is probably one of the best houseplants for beginners. They are considered to be symbols of good luck.

Over the years, a jade plant can grow to the size of a small shrub. Keep the plant in a spot that receives partial or indirect sunlight. Water your jade plant when the top of soil is just dry to the touch.



Lucky Bamboo

Lucky bamboo is actually not a bamboo, but a plant belonging to the Dracaena family (*Dracaena sanderiana*). It is an easy-care houseplant. Provide it with abundant water and it'll grow well even in indirect light. Often purchased growing only in water, this plant can remain that way if the water is changed weekly. Protect the plant from cold drafts and occasionally provide fertilizer. If you prefer, plant it in soil and keep it moist. Low to medium light works well.

ZZ Plant



Zamioculcas zamiifolia is sometimes called the “eternity plant” because it lasts so long. This super-tough plant tolerates dry conditions and low light. The plant prefers bright to moderate indirect light and well-drained soil. The ZZ plant can do well with half-strength general fertilizer one to two times a year in the summer months.

Snake Plant (AKA mother-in-law's tongue)



The low maintenance snake plant, *Sansevieria trifasciata* is one of the best plants for beginners. Easy to grow and hard to kill, it can be grown in low light with occasional watering. Snake plant also removes toxins from the air. Any normal room temperature suits this plant, which prefers low humidity and drier soil.



Philodendron

Philodendron plants easily adapt to low-light conditions and are available in vine and shrub varieties. It's best if the soil is allowed to dry after watering thoroughly.



Cast Iron Plant (*Aspidistra elatior*)

As the name suggests, this is a tough plant, making it ideal for beginners. Cast iron plant can withstand neglect, low light, low humidity, and a wide range of temperatures.

Peperomia



Peperomia is small houseplant that grows up to 6 inches tall. Due to its thick foliage, it is often incorrectly considered to be succulent. Peperomia likes slightly moist soil and humidity, but watering should be reduced in winter. Spraying the plant's leaves is helpful for maintaining the humidity. Poisonous to dogs or cats, keep this plant where they cannot eat or chew it.

Golden Pothos (*Devil's Ivy*)



This extremely low-maintenance vine grows without direct sunlight. It prefers bright indirect light and a draft-free place. Pothos can grow in low light and needs moist soil. Allow soil to dry out somewhat between waterings. An excellent climber, pothos is known for its ability to clean carbon monoxide from the air.

Spider Plant (*Chlorophytum comosum*)



With its green foliage and cream-colored stripes, spider plant looks beautiful in hanging baskets and pots or displayed on a stand. Spider plant prefers indirect light, as direct sunlight can burn its leaves. The plant is an air-purifying plant.

Peace Lily (*pathiphyllum wallisii*)



The peace lily is another easy-to-grow indoor plant. It also cleans the air. It can tolerate a wide range of light conditions and needs only moderate watering—in fact, this plant can act a bit like of a diva—it will tell you when it needs water by dramatically flopping over in its pot.

Additional Tips

- Don't overwater houseplants—even if an indoor plant requires moist soil.
- Avoid letting the plant become waterlogged and reduce watering in winter.
- Fertilize houseplants with all-purpose liquid fertilizer once a month during the summer growing season.
- Prune your plants regularly to maintain their desired shape and size.
- Clean dust that adheres to the surface of leaves. Use tap water and a soft cloth.
- Watch for pests, especially spider mites, which can be a major problem.

For more information on houseplants and indoor gardening:
<http://planttalk.colostate.edu>.



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